

Hamblin asks "concert of prayer" for spiritual awakening

LAS VEGAS, Nev. (BP)—The Southern Baptist Home Mission Board's vice-president for evangelism has issued a call for Southern Baptists to unite in a "Concert of Prayer" that Southern Baptists' simultaneous nation-wide revivals in 1986 would begin another great spiritual awakening in America.

Robert L. Hamblin of Atlanta, a former Mississippi pastor, issued the appeal during the opening address of the national conference of SBC evangelism directors meeting at the Holiday Inn, Las Vegas. "My desire is

for thousands and millions of believers in Christ to meet in small groups... offering up united prayers to God," Hamblin said.

Noting that every great awakening in history started as a result of prayer, Hamblin said Southern Baptists will never be successful in evangelism if they depend on programs and plans, no matter how good, instead of on God.

Hamblin said the second great awakening in America began after Isaac Baccus, a Baptist pastor and historian, led a group of pastors in

1784 to call for prayer groups all over New England to unite in prayer for spiritual awakening. Baccus used the term "Concert of Prayer" to describe the chorus of voices praying in harmony and unity for spiritual awakening.

Hamblin urged Baptists to observe days of prayer in their homes and churches, and to humble themselves in confession of sin, earnest prayer for an outpouring of God's spirit for healing of the churches, denomination, home and society.

Winfred Moore, first vice-president

of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of First Baptist Church, Amarillo, Tex., repeated a plea for unity in the Southern Baptist Convention divided over theological differences. "Until we as Southern Baptists become one in purpose and mission in unity, we're not going to have much influence in the world," said Moore, who spoke three times during the conference.

Moore warned that there is no use putting on the 1986 campaign called "Good News America: God Loves You" unless Baptists are really com-

mitted. "We're kidding ourselves if we think we can reach America and the world unless we are willing to make the kind of commitment that makes this the top priority of our lives in which everything else is secondary."

SBC Home Mission Board President William G. Tanner stressed that Baptists need to love the world the same way God loves the world. "God loves a man named Khomeini in Iran just as much as he loves a man named Reagan in Washington," Tanner said.

Jim Newton writes for the HMB.

The Baptist Record

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Published Since 1877

The Baptist Record

wishes for all of its readers

A very happy and meaningful

New Year!

Teleconference tunes eyes, hearts to needs

By D'Lesa Garnett Carroll

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — Eyes and hearts were tuned to crying needs of other countries as Southern Baptists viewed the second Foreign Missions Teleconference.

The teleconference originated in Birmingham, Ala., Nov. 23 and was broadcast over the Baptist Telecommunication Network (BTN). Viewers at more than 200 sites participated in this missions program, and had opportunities to call in questions to missionaries and missions agency leaders concerning the Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. More than 40 calls were phoned in.

Responding to questions called in by viewers were agency heads R. Keith Parks, Foreign Mission Board president; James Smith, Brotherhood president; and Carolyn Weatherford, WMU, SBC, executive director. Bill O'Brien, FMB vice-president, served as moderator throughout the telecast.

Segments of the teleconference focused on the critical needs in Ethiopia and Colombia, as well as Southern Baptist developments in China and Grenada. Accounts of work being done in the U.S. concerning missions were highlighted in portions of the program.

In Ethiopia were thousands of people are starving to death, foreign missionary Jerry Bedsole works as a veterinarian, giving medical attention to dying and malnourished farm animals.

Most importantly, the Bedsoles and other Southern Baptists are sharing the love of Jesus Christ with unbelievers. "It's hard for someone that's starving to death and having

physical problems to hear the gospel," said Bedsole. Meeting physical needs is the first priority, then sharing God's love.

Christian brothers and sisters are working diligently in grief-stricken Colombia to minister to survivors of the recent volcano eruption. Despite the avalanche of mud which covered an entire city, progress is being made.

"Southern Baptists have given power plants for cities without electricity, and food, medicine, and clothing to survivors who otherwise would not be getting well," said missionary James Giles in a live report from Colombia.

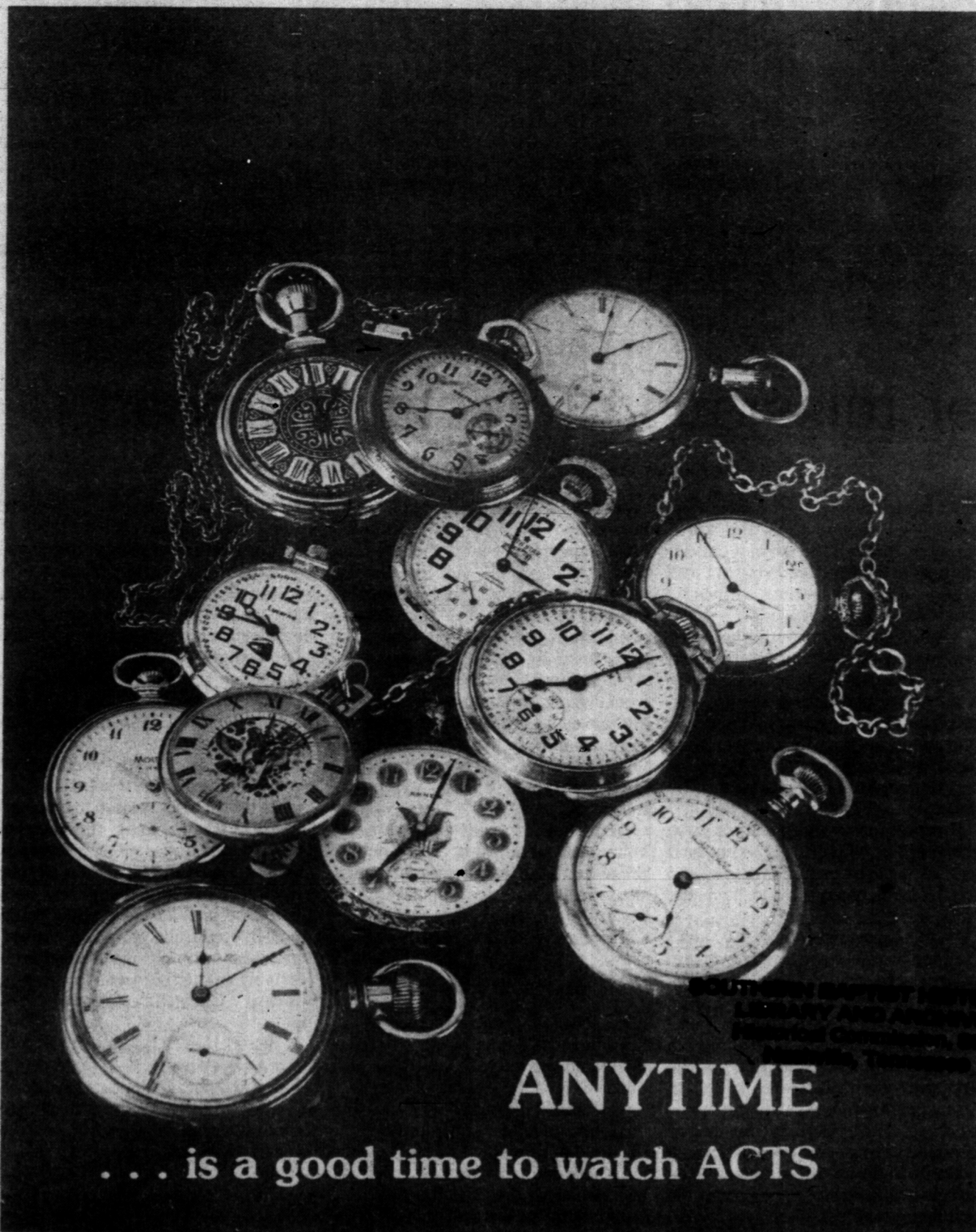
Carter and Charlotte Davis explained how their foreign missions work in Grenada is moving ahead. Baptists are responding to problems caused by the American invasion by meeting human needs and giving physical support in rebuilding homes, buildings, and even a dam. "Southern Baptists have provided financial support and Grenada Baptists are providing personal support," said Carter.

In order for more missionaries to be able to go out to the foreign missions field, more money is needed to send them, Parks said.

"If we really pray and know what's going on, we'd have the motivation it takes to give," said Parks.

The teleconference was a joint effort of the Foreign Mission Board and Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, to inspire Southern Baptists to give to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering during the Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions Dec. 1-8. The theme for the Week of Prayer is "And I Will Pray."

D'Lesa Garnett Carroll writes for WMU, SBC.



ANYTIME
... is a good time to watch ACTS

Photo by Ken Beazley, Radio-Television Commission, SBC.

Editorials by don mcgregor

A happy new year

It's now 1986. We have a bright and shining new year ahead of us, and we must be making arrangements to use it in the wisest manner possible.

It is a new page that we have to write on. Each of us will determine what we will put on the pages of this year.

Truly, Jan. 1 was just another day. The sun rose, and it set, as it had on the 365 days that went before it in the previous year.

We have, however, established Jan. 1 as a time of new beginning. It is the first day of the new year, and we look upon this as beginning with a clean slate.

It is also the time that we give thought to doing better than we had been doing as we begin a new time segment — a new year. Sadly, most of those determinations to do better are forgotten as we move along into the new year.

As we seek to understand what our relationship should be with the Lord, however, we know that it should be becoming deeper as we move along on our pilgrimage on this earth. The question is, are we really giving any thought to a deeper relationship and thereby an attitude of greater service; or are we simply moving from day to day and meeting our temporal obligations without any thought as to how we should relate to the Lord?

We learn to say the right things at the right times, and we cover up. The people about us may feel, in spite of what we know is true, that we are first-class servants of the Lord.

Perhaps, however, this new year may provide a time of introspection. Perhaps we might examine ourselves and see just how we measure up in our relationship with the Creator.

And for us at the Baptist Record, it is a time to wish the best for all of our readers as we enter into this new year. May dreams and aspirations be attainable, and may we have the inspiration and determination to attain them.

May this, indeed, be a happy new year.

Let's hear it again for RM 2493

Comes now the season again for embarrassment over RM 2493, the petition that crops up again and again with the allegation that Madelyn Murray O'Hair is trying to get all religious broadcasting thrown off the air.

Madelyn Murray O'Hair, as all know, is an atheist. She would be

delighted, no doubt, if all religious broadcasting were put off the air. But she did not initiate this petition.

In 1974 two California men filed RM 2493 with the Federal Communications Commission with the hope that the commission would license no additional religious radio stations. In

1975 the FCC denied the petition, and the matter was dropped.

Two things need to be remembered. Madelyn Murray O'Hair had nothing to do with RM 2493. And RM 2493 died in 1975.

Petitions continue to crop up from time to time, however, asking that

Christians would protest to the FCC about RM 2493. And they do, by the hundreds of thousands. The mail load at the FCC has become staggering just to cope with the letters concerning RM 2493.

What is the reason for all of this?

William Murray, Mrs. O'Hair's Christian son, claims his mother is causing all of the furor in an effort to bring embarrassment into the ranks of Christianity.

If such is the case, the best way to deal with the matter is to ignore it.

If you have a good excuse, don't use it.

Easy Street is still mighty hard to find.

Hats off to the past, coats off to the future.

Guest opinion . . .

Volunteer missions projects overseas

By Stanley Stamps

Would you like to be a part of an exciting and meaningful missions experience? Of course, you would. Thousands of Southern Baptists have already discovered that excitement and satisfaction. Each year a growing number are participating in short-term volunteer projects all around the world.

In some countries where missionary presence is restricted, volunteers on specific assignment are able to make a significant contribution to existing Baptist witness. In other countries where missionary presence is possible, volunteers have contributed through their abilities, talents, and witness to the ongoing efforts of the resident missionaries and national Baptist entities.

Such volunteer resources are to our missions efforts what "hamburger helper" and "tuna-fish" stretchers are to the homemaker. They could be called "Cooperative Program Helpers" and "Lottie Moon Christmas Offering Stretchers" as they compliment the efforts of missionaries and churches and help make existing resources go further.

Invariably volunteers returning from a project overseas, testify not only of spiritual enrichment of their personal lives, but of increased awareness of human needs and opportunities, as well as growth in understanding foreign mission efforts

and appreciation for the missionaries. Their own contributions for world missions through the normal church channels (Cooperative Program and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering) most likely are increased.

Given a good taste of mission work overseas, most often at their own expense, these volunteers frequently want to return for a similar experience, recruiting new volunteers as they go. In addition, the prayer base for missionary work overseas is broadened and strengthened. The dividends are many.

However, one valid question to be answered is, "Wouldn't it be better if we just sent the money overseas and let the missionary pay to have the work done?"

In all honesty, we might say "yes." National workers can often be engaged very economically. This would contribute to the local economy. But on the other hand, we might say "no," since to do otherwise would eliminate the most important element — the human element, the personal touch. Many people who go as volunteers do so on personal vacation time and at personal expense and probably would not contribute a relative amount to an effort in which they were denied the privilege to be personally involved.

Besides, multiple para-church and para-denominational movements are constantly offering them oppor-

tunities which compete for both their personal involvement and resources. Most important of all is the incarnational concept of the missionary presence in a place. The volunteer on mission is actually making himself available as any other missionary. In that sense, he is a missionary on a "sent-out" mission on the behalf of his local church, the sponsoring mission, and his own Lord. As a volunteer, he is being a missionary in the most tangible sense, not merely reading about, praying for, and giving to missions.

Hence, the greatest value of volunteers on mission is the actual presence of the volunteer missionary with specific abilities responding at a given time to an expressed need.

From a personal viewpoint, volunteers have enriched our lives and benefitted our ministry. Our home has been graced and blessed by the presence of numerous volunteers who have become a part of our extended missionary family. Friendships and bonds of love have been formed that never would have been it not for volunteer involvement in projects in our field of ministry. This is true not only between the volunteers and us, but also with the national brethren with whom we work. These are ties that are not easily forgotten.

There are some important questions an individual, a church, or an

association should seek to answer when they think in terms of involvement in a volunteer project overseas:

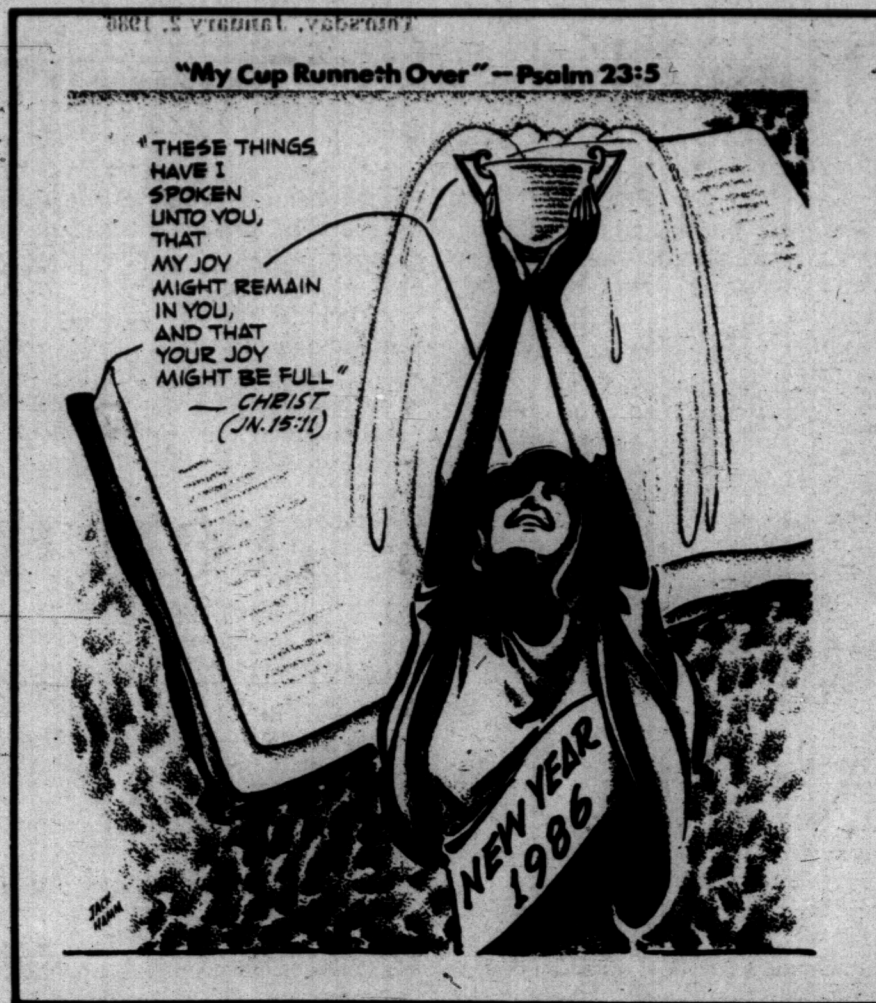
1. Is this project in response to a recognized need and request originating on the mission field, or is it one developed in order to justify my desire to do something overseas?

2. Is it an effort that will contribute to and enhance the ministry of the local church(es) overseas and resident missionaries; or will it tend to draw more attention to the church or group involved from the USA?

3. Is this project related to an ongoing effort on the part of the national constituency and your Baptist missionaries to reach the lost for Christ, effectively disciple them, and help them to become a part of a New Testament-like church; or is it a project unrelated to any organized effort to effectively relate those won to a warm, vibrant, Christian fellowship of believers?

Considering these questions can help a prospective volunteer group evaluate the project under consideration in the light of our commitment to cooperative mission efforts and the overall objectives of the Bold Mission Thrust.

Stanley Stamps, missionary to Honduras, is serving during a furlough period as missionary in residence with the Mississippi Baptist Brotherhood Department.



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Hudson will edit Sunday School work

NASHVILLE — Tom Hudson, pastor of Oak Forest Church, Jackson, for 22 years, has been named editor of Convention Uniform adult lesson materials by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board.



He will begin his duties at the Board today.

Hudson He will be editing materials for the adult Convention Uniform Series including Sunday School Young Adults, Sunday School Adults, Sunday School Senior Adults, On the Wing, and Bible Lesson Digest.

Hudson has written for Sunday School Board materials previously and holds a doctor of ministry degree from the New Orleans Seminary. He received a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary and a bachelor of arts degree from Mississippi College.

Before his pastorate in Jackson, he was pastor of First Southern Baptist Church, Anaconda, Mont., and was assistant pastor, Broadmoor Church, Jackson.

He has served in many capacities in associational work and in the work of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. He has served as a member and as chairman of the Baptist Record advisory committee, a committee of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

The Baptist Record

China deeds to help Christians, Foreign Mission Board hopes

By Erich Bridges

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has six file boxes full of deeds to property in China, and it hopes the documents will help Chinese Christians as they continue to reopen churches and expand their activities.

A small group of retired and former Southern Baptist missionaries to China huddled in the board's Richmond offices in December to examine the documents one by one. They constitute a fascinating record of more than a century of Southern Baptist mission work in China.

The documents, which have lain dormant in the board's archives for three decades, include deeds to land, churches, schools, hospitals, residences, and other buildings spanning eastern China, plus numerous photographs, drawings, and brittle handwritten maps of properties.

A 1924 appraisal valued the properties at almost \$3.4 million. Their current value is anybody's guess. Many of the buildings no longer exist. Much of the property was nationalized by the

government after 1949 when it was no longer possible for missionaries to work in China.

The Foreign Mission Board has never formally sought compensation for the properties — hoping instead that Chinese Christians might one day regain use of them. Any money that might have been realized from property settlements paled in comparison.

"It may be that such retrieval would have to be over a long period of time, but with deeds in hand and much patience, some progress may be gradually made," he wrote. Caution was a missionary in China and later secretary (director) for all the Orient when that country was closed to mission work.

Open churches in China now reportedly number more than 4,000 and the Chinese government has in numerous cases restored and returned church buildings, used for other purposes for many years, to the congregations which once worshiped in them. If restoration is impossible or

impractical, the government sometimes provides alternate properties or arranges for rental payments.

The Foreign Mission Board's deeds will be cataloged, computerized, and made available on request to Chinese Christian leaders, according to Lewis Myers, director of Cooperative Services International, Southern Baptists' new liaison program with China.

"In some places the presence of the deed in the hands of the Christian leaders talking to the (government) Bureau of Religious Affairs could probably help restore property to be used," Myers said. "In other cases, if it isn't already nailed down as property belonging to a church or religious group, they might register it as such and get paid fair rental value for the use the government is making of it."

The deeds include extensive properties in Shanghai, Canton

(Guangzhou), Kweilin (Guilin), Chengchou (Zhengzhou) and other cities. A few examples:

—an elaborate deed for property in Chefoo (now Yantai) in north China, originally purchased from the imperial Russian government in 1880.

—deeds for a church, residence, boys' and girls' schools and mission compound in Wuchow (Wuzhou), south China, and a 70-year lease on the stout Memorial Hospital, where famed missionary doctor Bill Wallace practiced. The lease didn't expire until 1984.

—deeds for college and seminary property in Shanghai. The Baptist-founded University of Shanghai is now the Shanghai Institute of Mechanical Engineering.

Erich Bridges writes for the Foreign Mission Board.



Crestwood assets to Village

A check for \$25,684 is handed to Harold Kitchings, center, executive director of the Mississippi Baptist Foundation, by Earl Baker, second from left on behalf of the former members of Crestwood Church, Jackson. The church disbanded and made its financial assets available to the Baptist Children's Village through the foundation. The physical plant of the church was given to Hinds-Madison Association. In the photo are Jeff Twiner, left, chairman of deacons; Baker, church treasurer; Kitchings; Paul Nunnery, executive director of the Children's Village; and Truett Smith, right, chairman of the closing committee for the church. The three church members named were on the closing committee along with Bill Johnson and Alton Bethany, all deacons. An additional deacon was David Price.

Mississippians appointed to Israel, Philippines, Singapore

Five persons with Mississippi ties were appointed to the Foreign Mission Board in December.



J. Dennis and Bonita Murray were appointed to Israel where he will be a general evangelist and she will be a church and home worker. He is pastor of Big Springs Church, Brookhaven.

An Arkansas native, Murray is a

graduate of Ouachita Baptist University and earned the master of divinity degree from New Orleans Seminary. He is enrolled in the doctor of theology there now.

Murray has been manager of a furniture store in Memphis and was assistant division manager and office manager for an agency in Jackson, Miss. He worked at the Brotherhood Commission, was youth director at First Church, Southaven, and was a Home Mission board church planter in Iowa.

Mrs. Murray is the former Bonita

Pettus of El Dorado, Ark. She served as a church planter with her husband and is educational secretary at Metairie (La.) Church.

The Murrays have one child, Jon Michael, born in 1972.

Floy O. Smith will serve as a business services worker in the mission in the Philippines. She has been coordinator of computer services for the Department of Defense Dependents Schools in Okinawa, Japan.

Born in Piave, Miss., Smith is the daughter of the late William and Ella Smith, formerly of Lake, Miss. While growing up she attended County Line Church, State Line, Miss. She is a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi with a master of science degree.

Mrs. Smith has been a coordinator of vocational training for the public schools in Hattiesburg, worked for a state investigative staff in Louisiana, and was part time youth director at First Church, Hattiesburg.

Lex and Pamela Bowen were appointed to Singapore where he will be a general evangelist and she will be a church and home worker.

(Continued on page 4)



Lex and Pamela Bowen



Dennis and Bonita Murray

'Good enough for Moses'

HAZARD, Ky. (EP) — The Ten Commandments hang on classroom walls in Perry County. Alone among the state's 180 school districts, it refuses to ban the ancient moral code from public schools.

Five years ago the U.S. Supreme Court declared unconstitutional a state law requiring that the Ten Commandments be posted in all public schools. The Kentucky Attorney General issued an opinion saying this meant that the commandments must be removed. Last year, after a complaint by the American Civil Liberties Union in Kentucky, the State Board of Education again requested their removal. But against the advice of its lawyer, the Perry County board voted to fight.

"It's time for Christian people to stand up for more morals in the school system," coal hauler Charles D. Campbell, who serves on the school board, told The Courier-Journal in Louisville. "The Ten Commandments were good enough for Moses, and I believe they need to be taught."

Peace Committee

Politics, structure discussions slated

ATLANTA (BP) — Political activities within the Southern Baptist Convention will be discussed when the SBC Peace Committee meets in Dallas, Jan. 20-21.

The 22-member committee, elected during the 1985 annual meeting of the SBC, voted to move from theological matters to political activities and structural matters when they continue their work to seek the causes of the controversy in the 14.4-million member denomination and to make recommendations about how to solve them.

"We said after our initial meeting we would begin with a discussion of theological matters, because we believe that is the root from which the other problems spring," said Chairman Charles Fuller, pastor of First Church, Roanoke, Va. "We also said we would discuss other matters such as political, structural and parliamentary. We will now begin to do that."

He added one member said the group should discuss the fact the two men most frequently mentioned as candidates for the SBC presidency in 1986 are committee members: Adrian Rogers, former SBC president and pastor of Bellevue Church, Memphis, and Winfred Moore, current SBC first vice-president and pastor of First Church, Amarillo, Texas.

Moore is widely speculated to be the possible candidate for the SBC moderates. He drew 45 percent of the vote in 1985, challenging current president and committee member Charles F. Stanley of Atlanta. Rogers, who was elected president in 1979 and declined a second term in 1980, recently was mentioned by a leading conservative as his choice for president.

"The committee member did not express a view on whether the men should serve, but only said he thinks the committee should discuss all aspects of the convention politics, even those involving current Peace

Committee members," Fuller said.

Fuller said he referred to the political activities during a devotional time when he encouraged committee members to set examples in helping lower the profile of the on-going convention controversy. He added he did not directly mention recent "theological position meetings" attended by three committee members: Rogers, Moore and Jerry Vines, co-pastor of First Baptist Church of Jacksonville, Fla.

Moore spoke at two meetings in North Carolina, Rogers at meetings in Tennessee and Alabama, and Vines spoke at a meeting in Florida, Fuller said.

Fuller said the committee members — from all theological spectrums — agreed the committee should discuss the political activities and their ramifications "no-holds barred and head-on."

Other matters scheduled for the January meeting include a discussion of the SBC presidency and presidential powers. It is the election of the president and the use of his appointive and presiding powers which have been at the focus of the seven-year political struggle.

Fuller said the committee also will discuss the role of the parliamentarian — another sore point in the controversy — and the possibility of negative designation of Cooperative Program funds. Generally, undesignated funds are counted as Cooperative Program giving, but some have suggested a way around the controversy is to allow churches to decline to support causes they differ strongly with.

The chairman said the Peace Committee was briefed on a lawsuit filed Dec. 5 in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Georgia in Atlanta, by three moderates who claim rulings and presiding at the 1985 annual meeting "violated their rights."

Robert S. Crowder and his wife, Julia, of Birmingham, Ala., and Henry Cooper of Windsor, Mo., filed the suit against the SBC and the SBC Executive Committee, seeking to have the election of the 1986 Committee on Boards, Commissions and Standing Committees set aside because of what they claim are "violations of the bylaws" of the SBC.

Prior to filing suit, Crowder told Baptist Press he decided to press his cause in the courtroom, citing the Peace Committee's decision to discuss theological matters first as one of his reasons.

Fuller said the committee intended all along to discuss political and structural matters, and had announced that intention. "We will begin in January. That, in his opinion, might not be quick enough for Mr. Crowder, but as far as we are concerned, we are keeping the faith with what we were charged to do and with what we said

from the very beginning."

The committee will meet in Dallas Jan. 20-21 and April 3-4, and in Atlanta Feb. 24-25 and May 13-14.

Men's groups plan for March meets

The various Baptist men's fellowship affiliated with the Mississippi Brotherhood Department met recently to make long range plans. Their sessions took place at Central Hills Baptist Retreat.

Among the planning groups were those which will have meetings on March 22 prior to the Baptist Men's Conference at Parkway Church, Jackson. These include Agri-Missions, Volunteers on Mission, Educators on Mission, Baptist Hams, Lay Renewal, Retirees on Mission, Women on Mission, and a special Brotherhood overview.

The Medical-Dental Fellowship will be meeting on May 1, rather than the March 22 date.

This planning session was the first ever for the educators who hope to encourage volunteer missions work among teachers and school staffs which have summer hiatuses.

The most specific planning was with the Lay Renewal group, readying for the promotional Year of the Laity in 1989. There will be a lay renewal retreat in 1987 to introduce lay renewal leaders to area coordinators. There will be fall 1987 area retreats, spring 1988 associational retreats, and throughout 1989 there will be churchwide retreats.

The Mission Service Corps leaders also met to plan their March 21-22 conference in conjunction with the Baptist Men's Conference. James Cecil, director of laity abroad with the Foreign Mission Board, will be guest. And the group will be scheduling a corps orientation meeting in the latter part of the 1986 early 1987.

Correction

In the Baptist Press story, "\$50,000 in hunger funds sent to Missouri farmers," in the Baptist Record, Dec. 19, the farm acreage for Missouri was listed as 79,369 acres. That figure refers to the total acres under cultivation in the state.

A homemade friend is better than one you buy.

Sin causes the cup of joy to spring a leak.

Penthouse, Playboy circulation drops, thanks to "...Decency"

TUPELO, Miss. (EP) — Penthouse and Playboy magazines have both suffered serious circulation drops, and both attribute the drops to efforts by the National Federation for Decency, according to a report in NFD Journal.

The report cites an article in Advertising Age, which said, "Playboy's current 4,202,324 circulation is far below the 7.2 million it claimed at its peak in 1972. Penthouse's circulation, which peaked at 4,711,849 in 1979, now stands at 3,200,863. . . . Executives from both magazines say these circulation drops are in large part a result of boycotts by groups, such as the National Federation for Decency, that have lobbied to prevent distribution of the magazines at convenience stores."

NFD reports that single copy sales, in stores such as 7-Eleven, account for 93 percent of all sales for Penthouse, and nearly 40 percent of Playboy's distribution. NFD estimates that sale of pornographic magazines brings 7-Eleven an annual profit of \$30 million.

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For registration information contact:
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Mississippians appointed

(Continued from page 3)

A Georgia native, Bowen is a graduate of Mississippi College and earned the master of divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary.

He has been youth director of Oak Forest Church, Jackson, and was pastor of churches in Oklahoma. He is pastor of Calvary Church, Tulsa.

Mrs. Bowen, the former Pamela Box, is the daughter of missionaries to Malaysia and Singapore. Her father is now pastor of First Church, Moore, Okla. She is a graduate of Mississippi College and has worked as a music teacher.

The Bowens have two children: Spencer Reid, born in 1981; and Amanda Hoyce, 1984.

FMB names record 429; relief nears \$10 million

By Bob Stanley

RICHMOND, Va. (BP)—Southern Baptists added a record 429 new overseas missionary personnel in 1985 and also moved close to the \$10 million mark in world hunger and relief giving.

These reports, made at the December meeting of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board, came amid reports of new ways the board is exploring to reach areas of the world where missionaries cannot go.

At the same time, the board warned financial support is lagging behind missionary growth and urged Southern Baptists to give sacrificially both through the Cooperative Program and the 1985 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for foreign missions. The goal this year is \$70 million.

Board trustees approved 46 new missionaries in December and reappointed five to reach the record figure. Previous high was 406 named in 1982.

Relief giving to meet human need around the world surged to \$9.8 million through the end of November, the latest figures available. The total for all of 1984 was \$7.2 million.

The emotional high point of the Dec. 9-11 meeting came as President R. Keith Parks and Executive Vice-President William R. O'Brien told of their recent visit to the Soviet Union.

O'Brien, who has led in seeing new ways to cooperate better with Baptists in both the U.S.S.R. and China, said the spiritual health of Christians in these two countries is evident in the depth of their worship and growth that has occurred even during years of oppression.

God creating

"Marxism, Leninism, and Maoism has been a 20th Century Darius in the hands of God creating a climate in which the church could get well," he said. "And in China and the Soviet Union it is getting well." (Darius the Great, king of ancient Persia, helped restore Israel after the Babylonian exile and made it possible to complete rebuilding the Temple.)

"I don't know what it's going to take for us to get where they are (in the purity of the church)," O'Brien said. "I don't want to go through what they've gone through to get there. But it probably will take either a revolution or a revival." He said he hoped for the latter.

O'Brien noted that in 1917 when the Russian revolution broke out, the church there was arguing over the width of the hem of the bishop's robe.

"Having experienced what I've experienced," he said, "I've decided the things we argue about are directly proportional to the distance we are from the real issues. God help us. God revive us. God help us learn from our brothers and sisters in these (other) parts."

Parks said Southern Baptists must resist the human and cultural pressures to remain local and respond instead to the Christian mandate to be global.

"The exploding opportunities for interchange between Baptist people, as well as other Christians, and the

Christians in China is literally overwhelming," Parks said. He noted the recent visit of a Foreign Mission Board film crew to portray the Christian church in China can be a "window through which we can catch a glimpse of God's moving among a great people."

A letter from Bishop Ding Gaungyun (K. H. Ting), head of the Three-Self Patriotic (Protestant) Movement and the China Christian Council, expressed hope this film would create "waves upon waves" of prayer from the Christians of America for the Christians of China, Parks reported.

Last April a new entity, Cooperative Services International, was created to help channel Southern Baptists who want to respond to requests from China and other countries which do not admit missionaries, but do want teachers and others with technical expertise.

Underscoring its readiness to offer whatever assistance non-Christian nations will accept, the board gave approval for projects in Kampuchea (Cambodia), Laos and Vietnam. It was the first such action since Southern Baptists left Vietnam and Laos in 1975.

Parks also noted the growing desire by Baptists in other countries where Southern Baptists work to be full partners in worldwide evangelization, both in developing strategy and sending missionaries.

While the board met in Richmond, Baptist leaders from seven Asian nations met in Hong Kong to talk about their involvement in "sharing the gospel with the multitudes of Asia," Parks pointed out. Similar conferences, stemming from the worldwide consultation held last June in Ridgecrest, N.C., will take place soon in Latin America.

"These and many other elements have caused me to realize that those of us here must carefully and prayerfully search for the next step in world evangelization," Parks said. "But in seeking new ways to witness, he emphasized, the board will not abandon its present approach. 'In no way,' he said, 'do I envision any diminishing of the emphasis upon geographic administration, on the career missionary, on comprehensive methodology, on the biblical basis of evangelism that results in churches, and on seeking to communicate all this to Southern Baptists.'"

All these are essential, he said, in order to take the next step. "I have an increasing awareness the Lord has brought us to this stage in order that we can become a more significant factor in the evangelization of the world beyond the locales where missionaries can live and perhaps beyond the circle of Baptist kinds of people."

To take advantage of opportunities in countries where the board does have work, the board appropriated \$6 million to purchase strategic properties. The money, available this year because of the greater buying power of a strong American dollar, will provide \$750,000 for each of the eight geographic areas of work to buy land in fast-growing population areas as

future sites for churches or other mission needs.

Charles Bryan, senior vice-president for overseas operations, said this is a "one-time opportunity" to acquire property which will be financially out of reach in the years ahead.

Even as this action was taken, Carl Johnson, the board's treasurer, noted the board had to raise cost-of-living allowances for missionaries in 88 of the 106 countries or territories where Southern Baptists have work. These increases will use \$1.3 million of the \$2 million which had been set up as a hedge against such possible increases when the 1986 budget was approved in October.

Johnson said he could not help being uneasy about the impact that declining value of the U.S. dollar could have in 1986.

He urged Southern Baptists to give sacrificially to meet their churches' Lottie Moon offering goals and then to increase their regular giving through the Cooperative Program. This is the plan through which members of the denomination's 36,000 churches give to support their state, national and global programs.

In other actions the board paid tribute to George H. Hays, retiring Dec. 31 as director of work in East Asia, and named William L. C. Richardson to succeed Raymond Kolb as field associate to Thurmon Bryant, director of work in eastern Southern America.

Richardson, 51, of Tulsa, Okla., will work in Brazil as a liaison between the board and the 329 missionaries and journeymen assigned to Brazil. He is president of the Baptist Theological Seminary in Minas Gerais in Belo Horizonte, Brazil. Kolb, who is 66 and nearing retirement, will continue in the assignment until Richardson returns from an upcoming furlough to the U.S.

Bob Stanley writes for the Foreign Mission Board.

Parkway announces evangelism clinic

Jackson's Parkway Church will hold a six day International Evangelism Explosion Clinic, Jan.

17-22. Leader for the clinic will be Bob Reccord, pastor of outreach and spiritual development at Carmel Baptist Church, Charlotte, N.C.

Reccord is a former director of witness training for the Home Mission Board and was director of leadership training for Evangelism Explosion International, an interdenominational witness training organization.

Staff Changes

Bryce Evans has resigned as pastor of Leaf Church, Greene County, and is preaching in a church in Alabama.



Denham leads Ministerial Education officers

Pictured left to right are officers of the Mississippi Baptist Board of Ministerial Education: Hardy Denham, president; Susan Puckett, secretary; Lannie Lanier, treasurer; and Glenn Eaves, vice president.

WHITING, N.J. (EP) — Reformed Episcopalians reaffirmed their position to abortion and their support of alternatives to abortion during the 105th Council of the New York and Philadelphia Synod of the Reform Episcopal Church.

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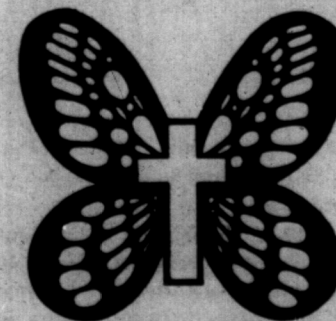
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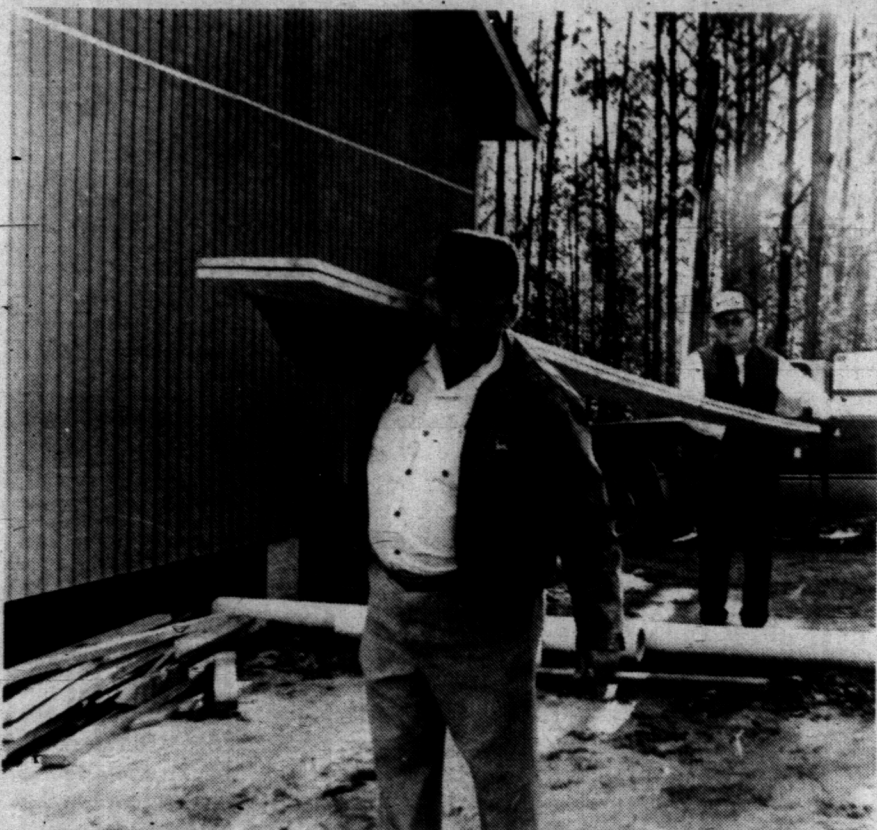
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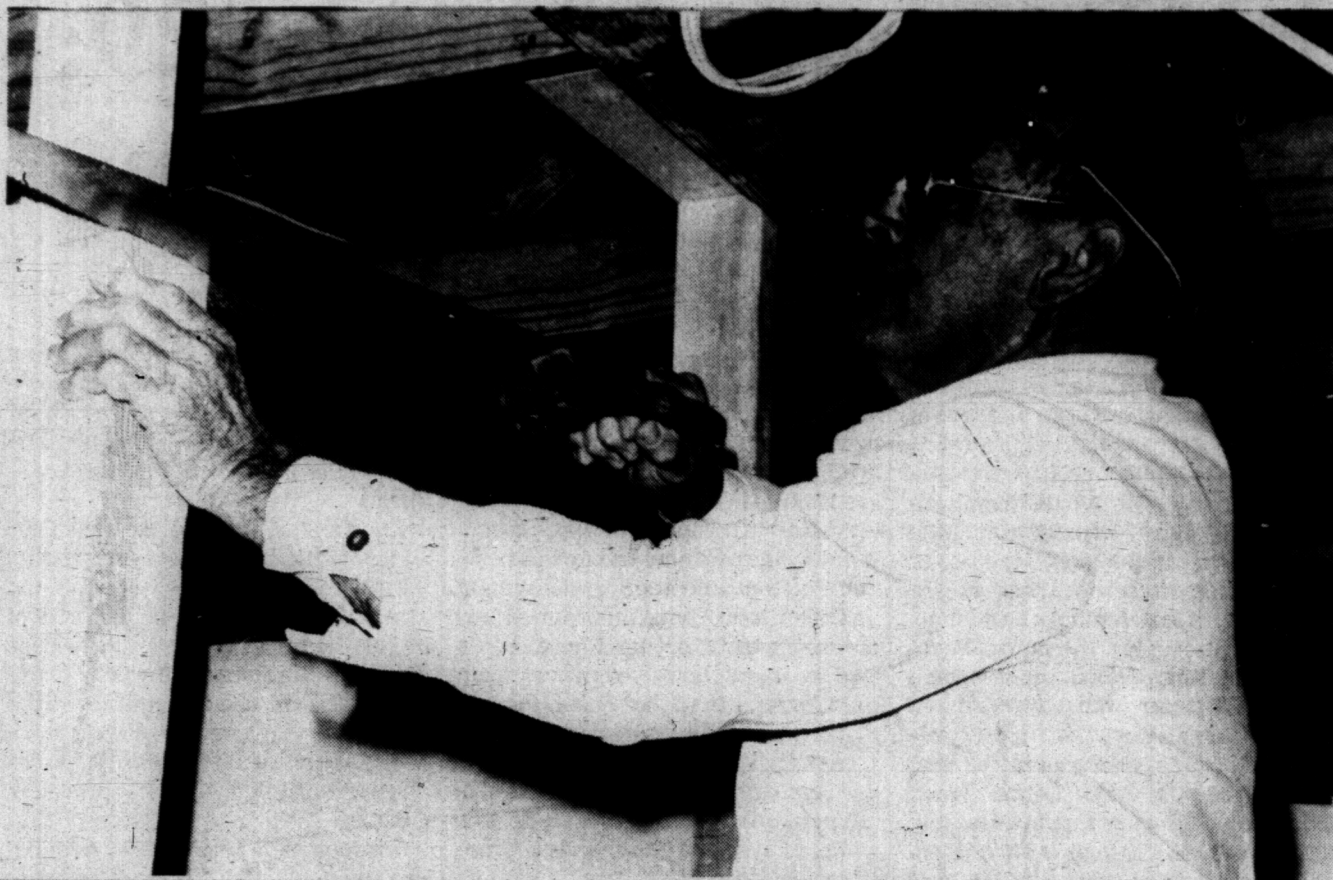
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Bill Traywick of Marks and Buck Fortner of Lambert carry a board to the rip saw.



Jarett Richardson of Kosciusko saws a shower frame.



Buddy Hunt of Bosier City, La., frames a window on the conference center at Central Hills.

Conference Center nears completion

The conference center at Central Hills Baptist Retreat near Kosciusko should be completed by March 31, according to Paul Harrell, state Brotherhood director.

Most of the work of the building, which will house 64 campers, is being done by volunteer labor. Joe Heranney of Hollandale is heading up the volunteer labor, supervising construction.

The center will be used for camping operations in summer and in the off season will be available for church and associational groups.

Funding for the center is coming from the sale of the Kittiwake property on the Gulf Coast which is the former RA camp.

Harrell contacted the Heranneys after reading of their volunteer work in Mexico in an article in the Baptist Record.



Volunteer painters Katherine Heranney of Hollandale and Cleo Hunt of Bosier City, La., show their rollers used to paint the entire outside of the building.

Projections indicate declining rate

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Slow progress in membership and giving coupled with decreases in some programs last year (including baptisms) paint a rather tentative — not bold — picture of Southern Baptists, according to 1985 statistical projections.

One of the bright spots is the anticipation 1.0 percent, or 78,573, increase for Sunday School, which has just completed a five-year enrollment emphasis. The new enrollment total should be more than 7.9 million, the fourth consecutive record high. The gain is almost double the 1984 increase.

Membership in Southern Baptist churches is projected to increase by a slower rate in 1985 than in any year since 1926, when churches in the Baptist Missionary Association were dropped from Southern Bap-

tist records. The projected increase of 0.7 percent, or 100,448, would bring the new total to 14,450,105.

In the 1950s, annual membership increases were in the three and four percent range, followed by two percent average gains in the 60s and gains averaging below two percent in the 70s. The percent increases have dropped four of the five years in the 1980s, even though the total membership has increased every year.

Baptisms in the denomination are predicted to decrease in 1985 by 6.9 percent, or 25,670, from the 1984 total, to 346,358. Slightly lower totals were reported in 1977 and 1978, which were the lowest since 1949. The record for baptisms in the denomination was 445,725 in 1972.

Church music enrollment provided another bright spot, with an increase predicted for the 20th consecutive year. The number of musicians participating in Southern Baptist churches is expected to go up by 0.6 percent, or 10,004, to a new total of more than 1.67 million.

Although total receipts and mission expenditures for the denomination increased faster than the rate of inflation, the percentages were lower than for the past several years.

Mission expenditures, estimated to increase by 6.7 percent, or more than \$38 million, are projected to total \$606,119,138 for the year. This would be the lowest increase since 1971.

Total receipts are projected to increase by 5.7 percent, almost \$209

million, to a new high of more than \$3.8 billion. This would be the lowest percentage increase since 1966.

Brotherhood is predicted to increase by 0.4 percent for the seventh consecutive yearly gain. The additional 2,274 persons will bring Brotherhood enrollment to 570,657.

Church Training enrollment is predicted to decrease by 1.1 percent, or 21,702, to a new total of 1,951,205. This is the second straight year for church training to decrease, but it comes on the heels of four consecutive years of gains which totaled 13.4 percent.

Enrollment in Woman's Missionary Union is projected to lose 0.5 percent or 5,848 for the year, bringing the new total to more than 1.16 million. This also would be the

second consecutive loss following four straight increases.

Estimates for the statistical projections are based on information from 28,380 Uniform Church Letters received the earliest in the research services department of the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board. Martin Bradley, director of the department, cautioned that normal statistical sampling error could cause the estimates to differ slightly from the final totals which will include more than 36,000 letters.

The final statistical report for 1985 will be released in February 1986. It will include all nine key categories in the projections plus a report on the number of churches in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Jim Lowry writes for the Sunday School Board.

Faces And Places

by anne washburn mcwilliams

The Light of the World

Dec. 8, 1985: Today in Kathmandu, Nepal, on a 24-day journey around the world, I watched a little boy in an English-speaking Protestant congregation light an advent candle, announcing, "Joy to the world, the light is come!"

"And the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not" (John 1:5). All along, I've known about the darkness, but never before have I so felt its thickness, its horror and gloom. On every street stands a blood-stained Hindu shrine — more shrines and idols than there are people here, I read. Across the valley, in the shadow of the Himalayas, is the Monkey Shrine where Buddhists climb a mountainside to light incense and where beggars sit beside the pathway. How I longed to say, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee." Yet here there is no freedom to witness, even had I known their language.

In Bangkok, Thailand, one night at the Candle Festival, I watched hundreds place lighted candles, with flower and grain offerings, on the surface of a lake. They worship Buddha, and were giving thanks to "the gods of the harvest." The lights on the water were beautiful, and this same ritual was repeated on rivers and lakes in many places that night. But I could hear the Lord saying, "I, Jehovah, am a jealous God, and I will have no other gods before me." My whole being was filled with love for the brilliant, hospitable, friendly Thai people. I stood there with tears I could not stop. "Jehovah is the God of the Harvest whom you wish to thank," my heart cried. "He is a God of love, and because of that he has sent to you the True Light."

One dark night in Bangladesh, I sat in a van on a river ferry past midnight. A ragged young woman carrying a baby walked round and round us, beating on the windows, holding out her hand for a coin. Long black hair covered part of her face, but not her eyes. Their burning depths kept boring into mine and would not let go. They asked, "Do you really care?"

I sat in a traffic jam, maybe a mile long. Sugar cane trucks, buses, cars, bicycles, people waited for a morning ferry. One truck had a broken axle, and was holding up the flow. The driver would not get out and fix it because "Allah willed it." He was just sitting there, until James Young, missionary from Mississippi, persuaded

him to be pushed onto the ferry.

"Darkness shall cover the earth and a dark cloud the nations," wrote Isaiah (ch. 60), but he also said, "The Lord shall rise over you . . . Nations shall walk in your light and kings in a dawning radiance. Lift up your eyes round about and see."

The Light is come, and everywhere shines steadily through the darkness. "Arise, shine, for thy light is come" (Isa. 60:1). I read that on a banner in Bangladesh. Deborah stitched it on a banner when she was a GA in Louisiana. Now she and her husband, Richard Farley, are rays of light in Bangladesh. I ate lunch in their home, beside a Christmas tree. On their development project they grow ducks and goats, and he shares his farming knowledge with the Bengalis.

At Magura, Bangladesh, 115 miles (a six or seven-hour drive) from Dhaka, a red Christmas star is attached to a long pole. It declares to the thousands who pass by, on foot and every other conveyance known to man, that the Light of the World is come. A small white church beside it has a cross on top. Inside the church I attended a Baptist Women's meeting. (It's across the road from James and Guinevere Young's house.) Women with happy faces, and dressed in bright saris, sang for us a Bengali Christmas carol. Joan Peterson, Mildred Jenkins (Guinevere's mother), Pansy Rankin (Jerry Rankin's mother), Guin, and Gloria Thurman sang "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing." What joy of oneness with our Bengali sisters!

In Dhaka I lighted an advent candle on Dec. 1, in the home of James and Betty McKinley, at their dinner table. They've been lights in Bangladesh a long time.

I stood in awe on a mountain in Nepal and watched the sunset bathe the snows of Annapurna. They, Joan and I drove down the mountain with a family of Nepali Christians singing, "The Light of the World is Jesus." In this land of darkness, the True Light shines. Persecution only brightens it. Commitment is something I never really understood before. Now, in Nepal, I have seen its meaning. And I have asked myself, "Would I be willing to go to jail, as did Paul and Silas, and as have some Nepali Christians, in order to share the Light with others?"

My heart glows with gratitude. The Light is shining — for me.

Mississippi wins training awards

NASHVILLE — Mississippi Baptists have received three awards for participation in church training programs.

Awards for the state convention with the highest number of church training leadership awards and the state convention with the greatest increase in church training leadership awards were captured by Mississippi. Mississippi Baptists received 1,002

church training leadership awards for an increase of 321 over the previous year.

The award for the convention with the largest percentage of churches reporting church training programs also was presented to Mississippi Baptists. Seventy-eight percent of the churches in the Mississippi Baptist Convention reported church training programs.

Thursday, January 2, 1986

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 7

Donnie Guy, initiator

Pastors' conference wanted for "enlightenment and encouragement"

By Don McGregor

Donnie Guy, pastor of Van Winkle Church, Jackson, initiated the pastors' conference that preceded the Mississippi Baptist Convention in November; and he has been named as a member of the convention committee to lay plans for a convention-related pastors' conference beginning this year.

In an interview with the Baptist Record, Guy expressed his concepts concerning a pastors' conference and his reasons for initiating one just before the 1985 convention.

The 1985 pastors' conference was not convention-sponsored. And while Guy was responsible for its being, he said that Van Winkle Church also supported it and backed it financially.

In 1983 a motion was placed before the Mississippi Baptist Convention for a convention-related pastors' conference. The motion was made by Gerald Harris, pastor of Colonial Heights Church, Jackson. The conven-

tion voted to appoint a committee to study the matter and report back in 1984. The report that was adopted called for no pastors' conference to be established but for convention and evangelism conference programs to be strengthened with more evangelistic messages.

In the meantime, Guy points out, he had been interested in getting a pastors' conference established on the coast while he was pastor of Woolmarket. When he came to Van Winkle he followed through on his plans, he said, and initiated on his own the pastors' conference that was held. He said he felt the pastors across the state wanted a pastors' conference. A motion of the 1985 convention calling for a convention-related pastors' conference was adopted by a four-to-one vote. This motion was made by J. Roy McComb, pastor of First Church, Columbia, who told the Baptist Record that he also felt that there was a general feeling of desiring a pastors' conference. Other pastors echoed this sentiment.

As a result of the convention action, a committee was established to plan the first convention-related pastors' conference for this year in order to get it under way. Both Guy and McComb are on the committee as is Harris.

For the conference that was held in 1985, Guy obtained the speakers. He said he had always thought that the state should have a pastors' conference, and he said he felt that his action of initiating one had spurred on the convention action.

The intent, he said, was to provide fellowship and a spiritual time with good preaching before the convention. "Pastors need preaching, too," he said. "The pastors' conference should be a

time of enlightenment and encouragement for them," he added. "There was never any thought about a political forum at all," he noted.

He said he talked to the other program personalities about his feeling that the meeting should not have political overtones, and all agreed. In addition to Guy, other speakers at the 1985 conference at Van Winkle included Harris and Ron Herrod, pastor of First Church, Kenner, La.

Guy said he fully supported the action of the 1985 convention in establishing a convention-related pastors' conference. His intention from the beginning, he declared, was to have a state-wide conference.

Guy was elected president of the pastors' conference initiated at Van Winkle, but he relinquished this post "to help establish the convention-related conference."

As a committee member he said he has been getting letters from all over the state because he started the first pastors' conference. He is looking forward to serving on the committee, he noted.

In the meantime, Van Winkle is making plans to sponsor a "Good News America" Evangelism Conference March 9 to 11. Program personalities include Bailey Smith, former Southern Baptist Convention president from Oklahoma City; Fred Wolfe, pastor of Cottage Hill Church, Mobile, Ala.; Herrod; James Merritt, former pastor of Highland Church, Laurel, who is now pastor of First Church, Snellville, Ga.; Davis Odom, pastor of Crossgates Church, Brandon; Harris; and Guy Henderson, director of the Evangelism Department for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Sandinistas begin "holocaust" in Nicaragua

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (EP) — Reports received in mid-November indicate that the Sandinista government has begun what Christian Aid Mission called "a holocaust for evangelicals in Nicaragua." A new and harsh wave of intimidation has reportedly been launched against evangelical leaders, including physical and mental duress, humiliation, and house arrest. Ministry offices have been entered, and materials have been confiscated.

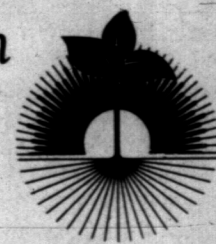
In the northern part of the country, an evangelical church was seized by the army in mid-October and the pastor and 11 people were killed. The remaining 20 fled on foot through the woods, and walked for two weeks before finding refuge in Honduras.

On Oct. 31, the Campus Crusade for Christ office was raided, materials confiscated, staff interrogated, and two arrested. Under intense interrogation for four days by the time word reached the U.S. was Campus Crusade leader Jimmy Hassan, also co-pastor of the largest evangelical church in Nicaragua, First Central American Church of Managua.

Also brought in for questioning were Pablo Boanerges Mendoza, head pastor of the church; Modesto Alvarez, president of the National Association for Children's Evangelization; and Ignacio Hernandez, director of the Nicaraguan Bible society. It is not presently known how many are still under arrest.

In an apparent effort to avoid negative publicity, the Sandinistas are asking evangelical leaders to come in "voluntarily" for questioning. While no military vehicles are sent to their homes, they are expected to report for questioning at 7:30 a.m., and often are not released until after midnight. One Nicaraguan evangelical said, "This is the most terrible thing that has happened in Nicaragua."

What do you say about Planned Growth in Giving?



Because of Planned Growth in Giving, I anticipate that there will be a renewed commitment on the part of many of our churches to further undergird Bold Mission Thrust.

James D. Yates

James Yates, pastor
First Church, Yazoo City

Young ministers wives' retreat set

Wives of ministers, staff members, and ministerial students will gather at Camp Garaywa, Clinton, Jan. 24-25, for the annual young ministers wives' retreat sponsored by Women's Missionary Union. Those attending should be 40 years of age or younger.

Featured on the weekend program will be Mrs. William G. Tanner, wife of the president of the Home Mission Board, who will lead two sessions on the place and importance of prayer in the life of the minister's wife.

Other features planned include small group conferences on husband and wife relationships, wardrobe and personal grooming, and how to economically decorate a house.

Mrs. Rob Sugg, missionary to Taiwan, will tell about her life and work in a foreign country.

Other program leaders include Betty Coward, head of Department of Home Economics, Mississippi College; Nan Davis, wife of staff member, Temple Church, Hattiesburg; Jan Cossitt, personal appearance consultant, Clinton; and Trish Simmons and Ashley McCaleb of the WMU staff.

Music will be under direction of Elaine Pounds, evangelistic singer

from Picayune, and Karen May, pianist, from Petal.

Registration begins at 4 p.m. on Friday and the program concludes Saturday at 1 p.m. The retreat is complimentary but registration is required. For additional registration information, contact the WMU Department, Box 530, Jackson 39205.

Women's meet is scheduled in New Orleans

NEW ORLEANS — An aerobics expert, a charm and modeling instructor, and the national president of the Woman's Missionary Union are among the featured speakers for a three day women's conference at New Orleans Seminary scheduled next Oct. 2-4, 1986.

The conference is being jointly sponsored by an ad-hoc committee of women in the New Orleans area and the continuing education department of the seminary.

A number of special interest seminars will be scheduled based on the input of those registering for the conference, JoAnn Leavell, chairman of the ad-hoc committee said. As the seminary receives requests for information, forms for submitting suggestions are sent.

Featured speakers already scheduled include: Ann Kiemel Anderson, author from Idaho Falls, Idaho; Marge Caldwell, charm and modeling instructor from Houston, Texas; Evelyn Christenson, author from St. Paul, Min.; Millie Cooper, aerobics expert from Dallas, Texas; and Dorothy Sample, psychologist and president of the Woman's Missionary Union from Flint, Mich.

More information about the conference and input suggestion forms can be obtained by contacting Thomas A. Kinchen, director of continuing education, New Orleans Seminary, 3939 Gentilly Blvd., New Orleans, LA 70126-4858.

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Fifth anniversary for Brister

Paul Stevens, left, pastor of Ridgecrest Church, Jackson, and president of the Hinds-Madison Association Pastors' Conference, presents J. W. Brister a framed picture of the Jackson skyline at night on the occasion of Brister's fifth anniversary as director of missions for the association. During the observation, David Grant, retired pastor of Broadmoor Church, Jackson, spoke on appreciation for Brister's work in the association. Grant was a member of the personnel committee that recommended Brister for the post. James Richardson, pastor of First Church, Madison, and moderator of the association, expressed appreciation for the weekly pastors' conference, which was initiated by Brister.

Devotional

Quality takes time

By Earl Kelly

"He that believeth shall not make haste" (Isaiah: 16).

Before James Garfield became president of the United States he served as principal of Hiram College in Ohio. The story is told that a father approached him on one occasion and requested that his son be allowed to "go through college by a shorter route" so that he could get a degree.

"Certainly," Garfield replied, "but it all depends upon what you want to make of your boy. When God wants to make an oak tree, he takes a hundred years. When he wants to make a squash, he requires only two months." Mississippi Baptists are producing too many squashes and not enough oak trees. The expressions we use everyday in our daily exercises give us away: we "jump" out of bed; we "gulp" our coffee; we "gobble" our food; we "rush" to the office; we "hurry" for home; and we "drop" dead! Our age is one of anxiety, impatience, short cuts, quick cures, unpreparedness, and shallowness. In almost every home, whether the words are addressed to the young or to the old, the family leader is heard to say: "C'mon, hurry up!" The adult generation is constantly reminding the younger generation that if they are "going to get anywhere in life," they had better "get a move on."

Someone has said when Whirl is king, chaos is his kingdom. When haste makes waste, it is the more important values that are lost. Should we

in our haste lose the most important values in life, we will end up with what T. S. Eliot called "A Waste Land." There is no purpose or thrill in living in a waste land.

Much of the Christian world looks upon the American haste as producing a cross between St. Vitus dance and the Ten Commandments — feverish activity designed to produce moral uprightness. We are people in a hurry. We chaff at the lazy, and we invent catchy slogans which fire people's imaginations. We launch new projects which promise us Utopia. If those who are at home with themselves chide us by saying, "Rome wasn't built in a day," we reply, "But they didn't have our 'know-how.'"

Has it ever bothered you why God seems to pay no attention to our noisy little clucks and marked-up calendars, our schedules, slogans, and time sheets? I must confess that sometimes it does bother me; and when I seek his leadership in knowing why his schedule is different from mine, he seems to always say, "I want sacrifice, excellence — not speed." Quality takes time. Permanent results are only achieved by a slow pace of righteousness and love. God is growing souls, not mushrooms; and that requires time. He is patient because he knows what the outcome will be.

As we face a new year, let us go forward in faith, knowing that "He that believeth will not make haste." In whatever project we invest our lives, we must be sure that he walks beside us; and we will always succeed if we never run ahead of him.

Earl Kelly is executive-secretary, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

Guru is gone from U.S.

PORTLAND, Ore. (EP) — Indian guru Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh pleaded guilty Nov. 14 to arranging sham marriages to help his disciples avoid U.S. immigration requirements, and he agreed to leave the U. S. immediately.

Under the terms of an agreement reached with U.S. Attorney Charles H.

Turner, Rajneesh paid \$400,000 in fines and prosecution costs, received a suspended prison sentence of 10 years, and was placed on probation for five years. The U.S. government dropped 33 other charges against Rajneesh, who agreed not to return to the U.S. during his term of probation without written permission from the U.S. Attorney General.

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Names in the News

Gregory Acton Davis, a member of Calvary Church, Tupelo, has been named in the 1985 edition of Outstanding Young Men of America. Davis, 21, is the son of missionaries to the Philippines, Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Davis.

Davis is a student at Itawamba Junior College at Fulton. Earlier he was a student at Samford University, Birmingham, Ala., where his parents received their education; but a hunting accident during the Christmas holidays delayed his educational pursuit.

Last summer Davis was involved in summer missions work in the Washington, D.C. area, where he ministered in a slum area. He was appointed by the Home Mission Board, but his expenses were funded by the Thomas-Washburn Scholarship Fund, which is administered by Haywood Washburn, a deacon in Calvary Church.

Davis is preparing for the ministry. He is active in the Baptist Student Union at Itawamba Junior College. He also works part time at the Tupelo Emergency Clinic.

Both of Davis' parents were students at Clarke College at Newton before being graduated from Samford University. His father is a native of Carrollton, Ala.; and his mother, the former Glenda Minette Brooks, is a native of Marks. She also attended Blue Mountain College.

ATLANTA (BP) — Joe Westbury, editor of World Mission Journal published by the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission, has been named assistant news editor for the SBC Home Mission Board, effective Jan. 2, 1986.

Westbury succeeds Michael Tutterow, who resigned to enter seminary full time and work part-time as associate editor of SBC Today, an independent monthly published and edited by Walker Knight of Decatur, Ga.

Robert H. Perry, Th.D., pastor of First Church, Waynesboro, has been selected to appear in the Marquis Who's Who 3rd Edition-1985-86.

Off the Record

After giving what he considered a stirring, fact-filled campaign speech, the candidate looked out at his audience and asked, "Are there any questions?"

A voice replied from the back of the room, "Who else is running?"

One newlywed to another: "Marriage is really a grind. You wash dishes, make beds. Then two weeks later you have to do it all over again."

Staff Changes

Chuck Hampton, a native of Shannon began his duties as pastor of Gaston Church, Booneville, Dec. 9.



Hampton is former pastor of Pine Grove Church, Tipton, Miss. Hampton received his bachelor of science degree from Blue Mountain College and the master of divinity degree from Southwestern Seminary. He is married to the former Deborah Davis of Booneville. They have a son, Chad.

Lula Church, Jackson called Billy Odom as pastor on Dec. 1. He has been serving the church as interim pastor.

Don Stanfill began Dec. 1 serving as director of missions for Marshall/Lafayette Associations. He had been moderator of the Lafayette Association. Arthur Leslie, who was former director of mission there, is now serving in Grenada Association.

W. Harold Anderson began work Jan. 1 as director of missions for Franklin Association. He will work there one day a week and will be available to churches in the association two Sundays a month. He can be reached by phone at 833-7743.

Just for the Record

Calvary Church, Newton, will celebrate the 25th anniversary of its beginning as a mission, Sunday, Jan. 5. Cliff Estes, former pastor, will be preaching. Services will be at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Glenn Davis is pastor.

Timothy R. Williams has accepted a call as pastor of Mt. Vernon Church, Columbus. He is married to the former Glennis Williams and they have two children, David and Kevin. He moved from First Church, Columbiana, Ala., Jan. 1. Williams is a graduate of New Orleans Seminary.



Thompson

Marty Thompson is new minister of youth and activities at First Church, Amory. His home church is Broadmoor in Shreveport and he just graduated from New Orleans Seminary.

Missionary News

Mr. and Mrs. William D. Moseley, missionaries to Brazil, have arrived in the States for furlough (address: Pine Trails Townhouse, Apt. E-2, Clinton, Miss. 39056). A native of Florida, he was born in Wauchula, and later lived in Avon Park and St. Petersburg. She is the former Barbara Cooke of Crowder, Miss. They were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1971, resigned in 1976 and reappointed in 1978.

Mrs. Virginia W. Oliver, missionary to Brazil, reports a change of furlough address (Rt. 5, Box 19, Elizabeth City, N.C. 27909). The former Virginia Winters, she was born in Leslie, Ark., and also lived in Alabama and Mississippi while growing up. She and her late husband were appointed by the Foreign Mission Board in 1950.

CLC meeting on apartheid issues 'call to concern'

By David Wilkinson

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Sixteen Baptist leaders have issued a "Call to Concern" which expresses support "for all who are working to dismantle the evil system of apartheid" in South Africa.

The statement was approved unanimously at a Dec. 12 meeting in Nashville entitled "Southern Baptists and Apartheid: A Consultation on Racial Reconciliation, Human Rights, and Justice."

The consultation was sponsored by the Christian Life Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention under the leadership of W. David Lockard, the agency's director of organization. The commission's SBC program assignment includes education and action on issues related to race relations and human rights.

In addition to the Christian Life Commission, the meeting involved representatives, both black and white, from the Southern Baptist Foundation, Baptist World Alliance, Home and Foreign Mission Boards, Southern Seminary, and Baptist Sunday School Board. Other participants were pastors of Baptist Churches and representatives from state Baptist conventions.

The "Call to Concern" emerged from discussion of the moral, religious, and political dimensions of the racial crisis in South Africa.

In the statement, consultation participants expressed their conviction that the issues addressed in the document "are not peripheral concerns merely tagged on to the Christian gospel but rather are fundamental

concerns that are central to the Christian mission and that belong to the very heart of the Christian gospel."

The statement, to be shared with Southern Baptist agencies and institutions and other Baptist bodies around the world, commends the Baptist Union of Southern Africa for recent action which "spoke courageously and stood prophetically against the gross immoralities of apartheid."

At its annual meeting in October the Baptist Union adopted a statement addressed to South African President P. W. Botha which urged "that the whole structure of apartheid be dismantled as a matter of extreme urgency." The official government policy, it declared, is "in conflict with the Bible" and is "an evil which needs to be repented of."

The "Call to Concern" intentionally avoided specific mention of divestiture, choosing rather to "urge that future economic policies be developed wisely and applied courageously to help in moving the entire South African society away from apartheid."

The statement praised those "men like Bishop Tutu and those women like Winnie Mandela together with those imprisoned leaders and hundreds of slain protestors who have valiantly laid down their lives for the cause of human dignity and freedom."

It also acknowledged "frankly but painfully... our own all-too-recent involvement as individuals, as Americans, and as Baptist Christians in a morally reprehensible system legally enforced racial discrimination

closely akin to apartheid as it still exists in South Africa."

David Wilkinson writes for the Christian Life Commission.

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NEW YORK, NY (ABS) — 100,000 Chinese Bibles and more than 60,000 Chinese New Testaments have been printed in the People's Republic of China on paper supplied by the United Bible Societies (UBS), the American Bible Society reports.

The paper for the books was supplied by UBS earlier this year to the Amity Foundation, a non-government and non-church social service organization initiated by Chinese Christians, as a gift in support of its work.

Arrangements were made by the Foundation with the Jiangsu Provincial Christian Council which used the paper for printing and publishing Bibles in the city of Nanjing, People's Republic of China.

The American Bible Society, a founder and partner in the global UBS organization, announced delivery of the paper in June and more recently of a UBS agreement to fund a new

printing plant to produce Scriptures in Nanjing.

"Almost all of the complete Bibles have now been sold out by the Provincial Christian Council," wrote Han Wenzao, general secretary of the Amity Foundation, on Oct. 12.

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Home Missions Teleconference

February 8, 1986
12:00-1:30 P.M. CST

Teleconference Highlights:

- Interview with Dorothy Sample, William Tanner, James Smith
- Interviews with home missionaries
- Theme interpretation which can be taped and used during the week of prayer
- Spotlight on a church which promotes strongly the Week of Prayer for Home Missions and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering
- Questions called in from teleconference viewers answered by missions leaders

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Music volunteers sought to fill missions requests

By Charles Willis

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP)—Church music secretaries from across the Southern Baptist Convention were urged to find qualified volunteers for mission service in new work areas during the annual state workers meeting at the Baptist Sunday School Board.

David Bunch, Mission Service Corps director at the SBC Home Mission Board, said for the 81 requests on file for music leadership, there are "no church musicians to recommend."

Currently, 35 music missionaries are on assignment in 22 locations, working for state conventions, associations, churches and groups of churches. Bunch said most volunteers accept two-year assignments, but persons who can give one year also are needed.

"Baptists being a singing people, it's a synergistic kind of thing in the congregation," he observed. "That's why we're investing time in a church music effort in new work areas."

Bunch said Mission Service Corps is a personnel vehicle through which persons give full-time service for a year or more, providing their own support in a mission and evangelism ministry on assignment through either the Home or Foreign Mission Board.

He said the need is for enough church musicians to be placed in new work areas to develop models for ministry to show what can be done.

One challenge of "Musicians on Mission," the five-year emphasis of the Sunday School Board's church music department, is to employ "skills untapped among people who have the resources to give," he said.

Bunch urged music leaders to seek qualified persons in behalf of the Foreign Mission Board's volunteer department and the Home Mission Board's Mission Service Corps office. Musicians desiring to explore mission service opportunities may also contact the state music secretary in their state Baptist convention offices.

Charles Willis writes for the Sunday School Board.

Names in the News

Mr. and Mrs. David Grant will serve as interim pastor of North Sea Baptist Church in Stavanger, Norway, Jan. 3 - April 3, while the missionaries Mr. and Mrs. David Hause are on brief furlough. Grant is retired pastor of Broadmoor Church in Jackson.

First Church of Lyman, Gulfport, recognized Mrs. Catherine Hatten on Sunday, Dec. 15, for her work as a Sunday School teacher, for the past 50 years. She was presented with a plaque and honored with a reception following the evening worship service. Argile Smith is pastor.



Letta Casey, a single parent, voices concern for jobs in the Appalachian hollows: "The main thing we want is jobs to avoid being hungry." Coal mining, once a booming industry, no longer provides the majority of jobs in Appalachian hollows,

where illiteracy is high and unemployment soars three points above the national average of 11 percent. (BP) Photo by Bob Kollar, courtesy of Tennessee Valley Authority.

House panel hears about rural hunger

Appalachian residents and hunger experts painted a poignant picture of life in that 13-state region for members of the House Select Committee on Hunger.

A single mother of four recalled the odyssey that led her from her childhood home in rural Tennessee to Florida with its promise of a better life and finally back to her beloved Appalachian mountains.

Letta Casey and two of her children now live in a small house on an acre of mountainside ground in Roses Creek Hollow, Tenn. She and 13-year-old Henry Lee and nine-year-old J. J. tend a garden to supplement their monthly \$153 food stamp allotment.

"During August, if we hadn't had our garden we would have starved—not just been hungry, but starved," Casey testified. "With our garden and food stamps we manage pretty well most months. What really saddens me is to think of the people who only draw food stamps for a living."

Casey described how her neighbors, most of whom have no transportation, are forced to shop at small rural groceries, which have to pay more—and therefore charge more—for their merchandise than large in-town supermarkets.

Climbing rent and utilities expenses also siphon food money away from many of her neighbors' budgets, Casey continued. She added, however, since her house has no electricity or running water, she doesn't "have to waste money on those bills."

Casey recalled how happy she was when school began this year because she knew her boys then would have at least two hot meals a day.

Another witness urged the panel not

to "just look at Letta and see how bad she has it, but see how strong she and her children are."

Teri Vautrin, who lives in Dunganon, Va., movingly told of the strength and pride of the Appalachian people.

"There is a strength you get from growing up in Appalachia," Vautrin testified. "Of all the things that my mommy and daddy gave their babies it was that anybody in America can succeed with hard work and determination. That anybody could get an education. I always believed in the justness of this land because my mommy and daddy did and taught us to."

Vautrin and her husband are both students, working to gain educations so to better provide for their family. Since both receive federal educational assistance in the form of Pell Grants, they have lost their eligibility for food stamps.

"On one hand, the government tells us, 'OK, you are in poverty, we will help you get trained for a job, to get an education.' Then they turn around and take food from our children because we accept this help."

"My daddy said anybody could get an education. What he didn't know, and what we don't understand, is why that education hurts. Don't force us to decide between food in our babies' mouths and food for thought."

Vautrin, as well as Casey, stressed the need for jobs in Appalachia. Those jobs could give the Appalachian people a chance to develop long-term solutions rather than continuing to depend on federal handouts, both women testified.

America has a problem of hunger

and a problem with hunger, testified Robert A. Couto, director of Vanderbilt University's Center for Health Service. The problem of hunger stems from the lack of a definition of hunger

and few and inadequate measures of it, he explained. The second problem comes from hunger's being an anomaly in a country known for its great wealth, he added.

Mississippians among grads of Southwestern Seminary

FORT WORTH, Texas — Southwestern Seminary graduates were challenged at fall commencement to choose the risk of brotherhood rather than seek position, power and prestige.

Commencement speaker James H. Taylor urged graduates to ask, "What do I have to offer life?" rather than "What can I get from life?" Taylor is president of Cumberland College, Williamsburg, Ky.

At the Dec. 20 ceremony Southwestern President Russell H. Dilday conferred degrees on 307 graduates, including 10 Mississippians.

Mississippians earning degrees:

Robert Scott White, Jackson, master of divinity; Steven Charles Walker, Madison, master of divinity; C. Keith Stephenson, Jackson, master of arts in marriage and family counseling; Judy Davis Turner, Jackson, master of music; Charles Richard Rogers, Centerville, master of arts in communication; Abbie Delisia Lynne Pegues, Tupelo, master of arts in religious education; Jody Holmes, Pearl, master of arts in religious education; Ronald Elmer Gilstrap, Jackson, master of divinity; Kenneth R. Bailey, Vardaman, master of divinity (he is pastor, Aberfoyle Baptist Church, Wolfe City, Texas); Joye Lynn Covington, Clinton, master of arts in religious education.

Ripley man is health officer

MEMPHIS — George H. Dunklin, a Pine Bluff, Ark., business leader, was elected chairman of Baptist Memorial Health Care System Dec. 10 at the semi-annual meeting of trustees in Memphis.

Dunklin, president of Cotton Oil Mill, Inc., moved up from first vice chairman, succeeding W. Fred Kendall II of Nashville, who rotated off of the board.

The new chairman also is chairman of the board of the Bank of West Mem-

phis and a board member of Jefferson Regional Medical center in Pine Bluff.

Other new officers include Clarence L. Stanford, Ripley, Miss., first vice chairman; Ralph R. Lawler of Trenton, Tenn., second vice chairman; and F. Irvin Hays, of Bartlett, Tenn., secretary.

The system, made up of 18 corporations, is owned by Southern Baptists in Tennessee, Mississippi, and Arkansas. Joseph H. Powell is president.

Mississippi Baptist activities

Jan. 3 State Training for Associational Faculty Trainers; Baptist Building; 9 a.m.-4 p.m. (SS)

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Baptist Record

A new commitment

By Peter McLeod

Scripture: Nehemiah 8:1-10:39
Focal: Nehemiah 9:1-3, 31-34, 38

Every December I set aside time to evaluate what I have accomplished — or failed to accomplish — during the previous 11 months. Following that evaluation I prioritize my goals for the coming year and then finalize the process by making detailed plans of how I can best achieve those goals. This evaluation process involves every area of my lifestyle and mindset — personal, professional, social, and spiritual.

Over the years I have talked with many men and women who practice a similar evaluation. Some do it on their birthday, others on their wedding anniversary, and still others on the anniversary of their confession of

faith in Jesus Christ. Wherever, whenever and however it is done, evaluation and a fresh commitment are rewarding and renewing disciplines.

Nehemiah 8-10 is a moving account of a significant time in the life of Israel. The people had returned from Babylonian captivity in 539 B.C. Under the strong leadership of Zerubbabel and inspired preaching of Haggai and Zechariah, they had rebuilt the Temple, revived Jerusalem, and restored the walls surrounding the city. But they did not stop there, for they went one step further; and that was the most significant step of all. They renewed their covenant relationship with God. A simple outline of the study is as follows:

(1) Confrontation — Chapter 8

(2) Confession — Chapter 9

(3) Confirmation — Chapter 10

A closer reading provides guidelines for us today.

Confrontation — Chapter 8

Ezra, standing in a pulpit built for the occasion (v. 4), read to the people from the Book of the Law from sunrise to noonday. The response of the people is noted in v. 9 when it states, "For all the people had been weeping while they listened to the words of the Law." (NIV)

Confronted by God's Word with their failure to be what he had called them to be, they wept. But their weeping turned to joy (v. 10b) when they understood (v. 11) that their failure was not irreversible; that their failure, forgiven by God's grace, could result in a future bright with promise.

Confession — Chapter 9

Following the reading of the law and the honest confrontation with their failure, Ezra then led the people in a prayer of confession (vs. 5ff). One notable characteristic of this prayer is seen in how specific Ezra becomes in detailing God's faithfulness to Israel despite her sin against him. "In all that has happened to us, you have been just; you have acted faithfully, while we did wrong" (v. 33, NIV).

And finally in vs. 35-36 he lists their sinning ways, saying effectively that general confession lacks specific forgiveness. It takes courage to confess specific sins and to ask for specific forgiveness — but God desires it.

Confirmation — Chapter 10

With the reading of the Law and Israel's confession of her failure, the people then confirm their determination to live in covenantal obedience. This confirmation begins in 9:32 and

is detailed in chapter 10. It emphasizes four specific commitments: (1) no intermarriage with heathen people in the land (v. 30), (2) no business transactions of any kind on the Sabbath (31a), (3) a pledge to recognize and practice a year of release every seven years (31b) and (4) a promise to support the Temple through tithes and offerings (vs. 32-33).

At the beginning of each new year, I think it is a healthy and strengthening act to write down in specific terms the goals or resolutions that one hopes to fulfill. A periodical rereading, reviewing, and re-evaluation of those aims helps chart one's progress. Like the Israelites, we need a time of rededication to our own commitments — with God, with our fellow man, and with ourselves.

Peter McLeod is pastor of First Church, Hattiesburg.

Persons are important

By Gus Merritt

Matthew 10:28-31; Mark 2:23 to 3:6

I. A person is of infinite value to God (Matt. 10:28-31). Very clearly, Jesus teaches us that the heavenly Father is greatly concerned about all of his creation. The sparrow does not go unnoticed, even though it has little monetary value. If God the Father shows such concern for a sparrow, how much more he is concerned for you. That concern is so complete that the very hairs on your head are numbered.

Out of this great lesson we learn to look to the heavenly Father to supply our needs and to care for us. We also learn we are to have the same concern for the needs of others. God is able to destroy both soul and body. Yet, it is not the Father's desire that we be

harmed in any way. His great love for us causes him to always desire the very best for us. The only times his best is not received is because we have hindered it by not yielding to him.

II. Legalism versus the law of love (Mark 2:23-28). So much legalism had been developed by the religious leaders within Judaism concerning the law that the law had become almost unbearable. A person lived in constant fear of being in violation of the law or of one of the many traditions. God gave the law to protect and provide for the needs of his people. The Pharisees had made the law and its observance more important than the needs of the people.

The law, as taught by the Pharisees, allowed a person to pick grain for food on the Sabbath. But if the grain was rubbed between the hands to remove the chaff or husk, this was "threshing" and was unlawful. Jesus used the example of David to show that there were exceptions if there was a need to feed the hungry. Even the Pharisees accepted David's reason for eating the devoted bread. Whenever the interpretation of the law is so rigid, when it makes no exceptions or allowances, it becomes a burden and not a benefit. Jesus teaches us that a person's basic needs are more important than the ceremonial keeping of a ritual.

Jesus' actions were motivated by

love. He came into this world because of love (John 3:16). His every action in behalf of others was motivated by love. Even when he became indignant, it was because he saw people being hurt by other people.

III. Jesus heals on the Sabbath (Mark 3:1-6). It is not improbable that the Pharisees sent the man with the withered hand to Jesus to see what he would do. When our motives are out of hatred rather than love, the needs of others become secondary. Our motives become self-serving. The Pharisees were not concerned by the physical needs of the man with the withered hand to Jesus to see what he man was a stone mason and wanted his hand healed so he could earn his own living. The Pharisees were not as concerned with the keeping of the Sabbath as they pretended. They were more concerned with trapping Jesus and having him put to death. Jesus had exposed their empty religion and practice of hypocrisy. The Pharisees had exercised power over the people

for selfish reasons. Now, Jesus had exposed them for what they were. They wanted to kill Jesus. Jesus asked, "Is it lawful to do good or do harm, to heal or to kill?" The Pharisees wanted to kill Jesus but did not want the man with the withered hand healed.

When we love as Christ loves, we will always be looking for ways to help others. Our first concern will be to bring them to Jesus for salvation. Helping to meet a person's physical needs may be the best means of opening the door to share our witness with them. Most people respond to genuine compassion. A simple acrostic may help at this point:

Jesus first
Others second
Yourself last.

One of the best ways to see how Jesus fulfilled the law is to participate in the January Bible Study on the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Gus Merritt is pastor of Clarke-Venable Church, Decatur.

Proclaiming the true gospel

By Billy McKay

I Timothy 1:1-17

Introduction: I and II Timothy and Titus are called the "Pastoral Epistles" because they set forth principles of pastoring a church and how believers ought to conduct themselves in worship. Timothy and Titus were Paul's "preacher boys." To introduce the letter of I Timothy, let us consider the following: (1) **The penman.** The writer of this letter was Paul. We learn this from the signature of the writer (1:1). The status of the writer is that of an apostle (1:1). An apostle was like a five-star general in the army or an admiral of a fleet of ships. Apostles were the highest ranking officials in the early church. They had seen Christ in his resurrection (cf. I Cor. 9:1), and received their message directly from him (cf. Gal. 1:11-12). (2) **The period.** It seems as if Paul wrote this epistle about 63 A.D. and between his first and second imprisonments. (3) **The people.** The letter was addressed to Timothy (1:1) who was the pastor of the church in Ephesus, which was the most influential church in Asia Minor. Timothy had a pagan gentile father (cf. Acts 16:1-3) but a devout Jewish mother,

Eunice, (cf. 2 Timothy 1:5) who had taught him the Old Testament (cf. 2 Timothy 3:15). Paul had won Timothy to Christ (cf. Acts 16:1-3; I Timothy 1:2). (4) **The purpose.** The purpose of writing is stated in 3:15. The early church was like a small island in a great sea of paganism. If the church were well-grounded in the scriptures and was properly organized, it would not only survive but it also would prevail. The same is true today.

In verses 1-17 we see three aspects in proclaiming the true gospel:

I. **We must combat false teaching** (1:3-7). The purpose of true teaching is to build people up in the life of holiness (1:4), to produce love out of a pure heart, (1:5) and to produce a good conscience and a sincere faith (1:5). Paul had warned the elders about false teaching in Acts 20:29-30. Many false teachers followed in Paul's footsteps and opposed his teaching. This would lead to division in the churches and would divide and conquer the effectiveness of the gospel. Their method was to teach that Christians were still to observe the ceremonial laws of Moses which in-

cluded the rituals and holy days. They tried to impress men with hidden meanings of the Old Testament. They would present "fables" (1:4) or stories out of the Bible to substantiate this false doctrine. They would teach genealogies in which they put merit on being the physical seed of Abraham. They placed this relationship above a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

II. **We are to clarify the difference between law and grace** (1:8-11). I have coined my own definitions of law and grace. Practically speaking, law is "man's power." In contrast to this is grace, which I define as "God's power." Is salvation by man's power or God's power? Law reveals our sin, guilt, and weakness before God (Rom. 3:19-20; 8:3). Grace (God's power) is the only means of our salvation (cf. Eph. 2:8). The 10 Commandments set forth the demands of a perfect God. Man's power is inadequate to keep them. The law drives us to Christ, who alone can save and perfect.

III. **We are to confess the Lord Jesus Christ publicly** (1:12-17). Paul now tells what the grace of God had done

in his own life. It had put him in the ministry (1:12). It had forgiven him of his sins (1:13). There was nothing in Paul's past that could account for his present privilege. Grace (God's power) alone was the key to Paul's life, and it is to ours. He received mercy, not justice, from God. In grace God even counted Paul's wilful sins as ignorance so that he could apply his grace (1:13). In the Old Testament there was no prescribed sacrifice for wilful sins but for sins of ignorance there was a prescribed sacrifice (cf. Lev. 4). God used this same principle in dealing with David (Psalm 51). Every Christian has a fabulous testimony for Jesus Christ! If you never lived in the gutter, the grace of God was there through the years to keep you out. If you committed gross and horrible sins, the grace of God forgave you. It is noteworthy to remember that Paul's conversion is mentioned six times in the New Testament (cf. Acts 9, Acts 22, Acts 26, Gal. 1-2, Phil. 3:6-7 and I Tim. 1:12-17).

Conclusion: Proclaiming the true gospel can make an impact in the world today. Two basic facts must be

included: the teaching of sound doctrine and the living of godly lives.

Billy McKay is pastor of First Church, Belzoni.

Baptist Record

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